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BY OSTRANDER, McDONNELL & LEWIS
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OH LOVELY! BLEEDIN' LOVELY! NOW WHAT ARE WE S'POSED T'DO?
GO THROUGH THEM.
IF WE HAVE TO.

YOU KNOW, WE'RE ALL GUESTS HERE. IT'S LIKE WE'RE IN SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME. WE SHOULDN'T FIGHT.
BOZENO!!
COMRADES, HAVE INTERCEPTED TRANSMISSIONS INDICATING PEOPLE'S HEROES, THE HERO RED STAR, AND A SQUADRON OF MY FELLOW ROCKET REDS ARE ENROUTE. SUGGEST WE DO WHAT IS NECESSARY QUICKLY.

YOU!!!
I KNOW YOU!!!
WHY DO I KNOW YOU?!
OKAY, I GIVE UP. WHY DO YOU KNOW ME?

HOLD ON THERE... WHOEVER YOU ARE.
YOU TAKE ON ONE MEMBER OF THE JLI AND YOU TAKE ON THEM ALL.
FINE BY ME. YOU WANT TO GO FIRST, LITTLE MAN?

GRRR...
UH...YOU WANT TO HELP ME WITH THIS, MIRACLE?
I NEVER SAW HER BEFORE, BB. SHE'S ALL YOURS.

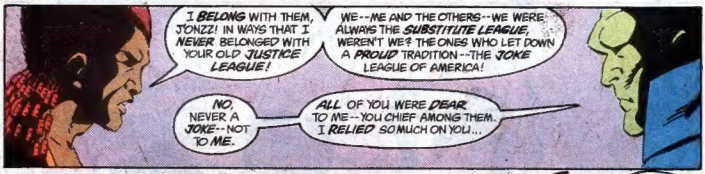
OH SWELL.
FLIP
WHONG!

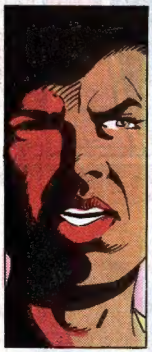
YOU THINK THAT'S FUNNY, WORM?!
ERNNK!
HAW HAW! HEY, GREAT TOUCH YOU'VE GOT WITH THE LADIES, BEETLE!
YOU MAKE BETTER FIRST IMPRESSIONS THAN I DO!
FINGO
I'LL SHOW YOU FUNNY!!!
FORCE FIELD...UP! UP! AND AWAY FROM ME!
SUSHNG
PICK A RDE.
WATCH THE SHRAPNEL.
AHHH... DEARSHOT.
GOING TO PULL YOUR SHOTS AGAIN?
IF SO, DON'T WASTE MY TIME.
GO TO HELL.

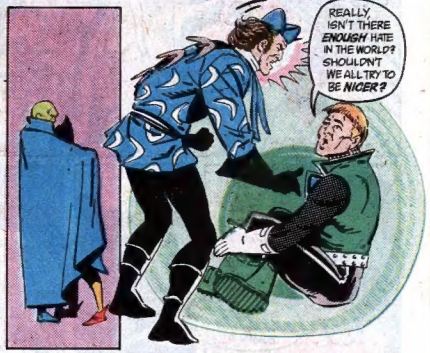
RICK, WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS! THE WHOLE MISSION IS PREDICATED ON GETTING OUT WITH TOM* BEFORE ANYONE KNOWS WE'RE HERE!
*TOM TRESSER A.K.A. NEMESIS. --BOB

STALL. I'LL TALK WITH BATMAN. HE'LL UNDERSTAND.

MARI?
VIXEN?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THESE... CRIMINALS?
WELL, WELL! HAVE I FINALLY SHOCKED THE COLDLY LOGICAL MANHUNTER FROM MARS?

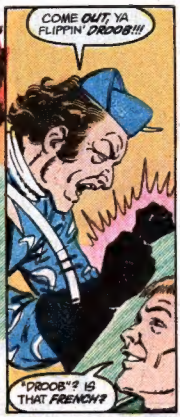

I BELONG WITH THEM, JONZ! IN WAYS THAT I NEVER BELONGED WITH YOUR OLD JUSTICE LEAGUE!
WE--ME AND THE OTHERS--WE WERE ALWAYS THE SUBSTITUTE LEAGUE, WEREN'T WE? THE ONES WHO LET DOWN A PROUD TRADITION--THE JOKE LEAGUE OF AMERICA!
NO, NEVER A JOKE--NOT TO ME.
ALL OF YOU WERE DEAR TO ME--YOU CHIEF AMONG THEM. I RELIED SO MUCH ON YOU...




REALLY, ISN'T THERE ENOUGH HATE IN THE WORLD? SHOULDN'T WE ALL TRY TO BE NICER?

I'M FIGHTIN' BLEEDIN' MR. ROGERS!
AWRIGHT-- I'LL BUST YA OUT OF THERE!

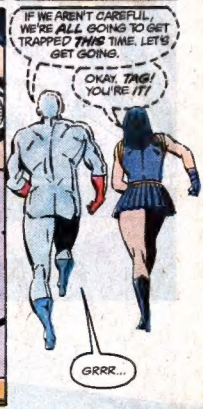
WHAM!
OH NO! STOP! PLEASE!
YOU MIGHT HURT YOURSELF!


COME OUT, YA FLIPPIN' DROOB!!!
"DROOB"? IS THAT FRENCH?

GYAAAAAH!

NIGHTSHADE--EVE--WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?! IN COSTUME YET! WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE BOYFRIEND/GIRLFRIEND--WHAT IF SOMEONE RECOGNIZES YOU? IT COULD JEOPARDIZE CAPTAIN ATOM'S MISSION!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD, WE BOTH WORK FOR THE GOVERNMENT!

THE LEAGUE DOESN'T KNOW THAT. ABOUT ME OR YOUR SQUAD!
LOOK, JUST KEEP CLOSE TO ME IN THIS RHUBARB AND WE'LL BOTH FAKE IT UNTIL WE SEE WHAT WE CAN PULL OUT OF THIS FIASCO, OKAY?
OKAY, BUT WE'RE TRYING TO GET ONE OF OUR OWN PEOPLE OUT OF HERE. HE GOT TRAPPED IN RUSSIA ON OUR LAST BOTCHED MISSION!
WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM OUT.

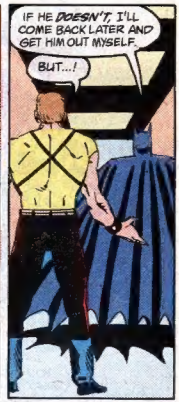

IF WE AREN'T CAREFUL, WE'RE ALL GOING TO GET TRAPPED THIS TIME. LET'S GET GOING.
OKAY, TAG! YOU'RE IT!
GRRR...

SO THAT'S THE STORY... PLAIN AND SIMPLE. WE'RE JUST HERE TO RESCUE NEMESIS AND GET OUT, OKAY?
WANT TO HELP ME PUT A STOP TO THIS BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF HAND?
NO.

I'M NOT THE LEADER OF THE LEAGUE ANYMORE, FLAG, AND EVEN IF I WAS, I WOULDN'T STOP THIS.
I TOLD YOU AND WALLER I'D FIND ANOTHER WAY OF GETTING YOUR SQUAD. YOU PEOPLE MAKE A JOKE OF EVERYTHING I DO!

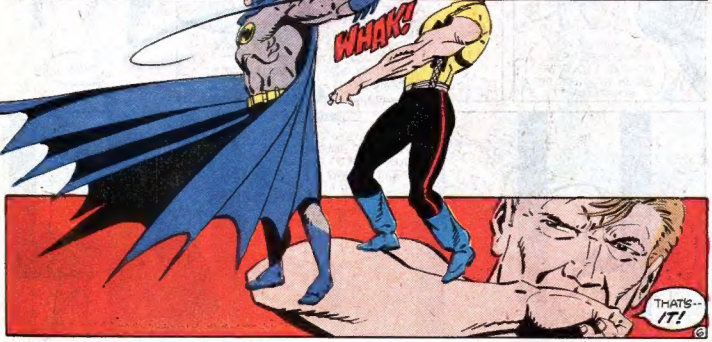
WHAT ABOUT NEMESIS? YOU WORKED WITH HIM...!

IF HE'S WORKING WITH YOU NOW, HE'S NOT THE NEMESIS I KNEW AND DESERVES HIS FATE.


IF HE DOESN'T, I'LL COME BACK LATER AND GET HIM OUT MYSELF.
BUT...!

DAMMIT, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!
I'M TALKING TO YOU!

GET-- YOUR-- HAND-- OFF!


WHAK!
THAT'S-- IT!

I'VE HAD ENOUGH!!!
WHUNK!
LOOK, I REALLY DON'T LIKE TO HIT WOMEN...
I'M GONNA MASH YOU TO DOG-FOOD!
...AND I'M NOT SURE HITTING YOU WOULD DO ANY GOOD!
UHNGG
KRAK!
WHAM!
I PREFER PEOPLE AT EYE-LEVEL.
BLAM BLAM
SPLANG
FINE.
HERE'S A GOOD LOOK AT MY BOOT.
WHUMP!
THIS IS REAL STRANGE.
I SAW FLAG, CAPTAIN BOOMERANG, AND DEADSHOT WORKING TOGETHER WHEN WE ALL WENT AFTER FIRESTORM IN TIMES SQUARE. ARE THEY SOME SORT OF TEAM?
--HE WAS ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS. SO WHAT GIVES?
NIGHTSHADE'S SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS AND SO WAS VIXEN, THE LAST I HEARD. THE REPORT ON BRONZE TIGER HERE HAS BEEN MIXED, BUT BATMAN'S LAST ENTRY SAID--
7

WHUUU
WHUNT!
TIGER, IS THERE SOMETHING GOING ON HERE THAT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT?

PROBABLY.

CARE TO EXPLAIN?
I CAN'T.
OH. WELL. THEN, NEVER MIND.

HAI!
HUI!

PRISONER, YOU SEEM... HURT. HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?
KGB'S SOFTENING ME UP FOR THE GRAVE.

YOU WERE TRYING TO ESCAPE, YES?
I WAS TRYING TO HELP THE AUTHOR, ZOYA TRIGORIN, ESCAPE. THEY SHOT HER DOWN. WHEN I WENT BACK FOR HER, THEY CAPTURED ME.*
*SQUAD #5-7. -- BOB

I-- I READ HER BOOK--SECRETLY, BECAUSE WAS BANNED. I LIKED IT MUCH.
HOW DO I KNOW WHAT YOU TELL ME IS TRUTH?
YOU LISTEN. AND YOU DECIDE FOR YOURSELF.
CCCP

LET ME GET THIS RIGHT. YOUR GIMMICK'S JUST THOSE SKINNY SPEARS?
JAVELINS! JAVELINS!
AND YOU WANT TO GO UP AGAINST ME? WOWSERS! ARE YOU DUMB!

I'M THE JAVELIN, DAMN IT! I'VE TAKEN ON GREEN LANTERN...
...AND LOST! LIKE NOW.
STAB STAB
NO OFFENSE, BUDDY, BUT YOU'RE JUST NOT IN MY LEAGUE.
WHY NOT JUST LIE DOWN AND ACCEPT DEFEAT GRACEFULLY...?
OH YEAH?!? OH YEAH?!?
I'LL NAIL YA TO THE WALL!!!
FIP
FIP
FIP
I THOUGHT I SHOWED-OFF MY FORCE FIELD.
WHANG
PAY ATTENTION. I'M NOT GOING TO DO THIS ALL DAY.
YIKE!
WHiii
WHiii
WHiii
MEANWHILE, STATESIDE...
LOOK, LORD; I'M NOT HERE TO ARGUE WITH YOU!
THAT JACKASS FLAG WENT OFF HALF-COCKED AND UNAUTHORIZED. THE ONLY REASON I ASKED THE PRESIDENT TO LISE YOUR MANGY JLI WAS TO PROVIDE A WAY TO GET THEM BACK WITHOUT TIPPING OUR GOVERNMENT CONNECTION WHICH YOU AREN'T SUPPOSED TO KNOW ABOUT ANYWAY!
AMANDA, AMANDA, A-MANDA-- I'D LOVE TO HELP YOU. HONEST.
BUT SOONER OR LATER YOUR COVER'S GOING TO GET BLOWN ANYWAY. TOO MANY PEOPLE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT IT WHO SHOULDN'T -- SUCH AS ME. ITS INEVITABLE, SWEETHEART!
NOTE--MAX LORD'S IN THE HOSPITAL, RECOVERING FROM INJURIES SUFFERED DURING MILLENNIUM. --HELPFUL BOB

SO WHY SHOULDN'T THE JL/ REAP THE BENEFITS BY EXPOSING YOU FIRST?

I MEAN, IT WOULD HELP OUR STANDING TREMENDOUSLY WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS THAT DON'T YET FULLY TRUST US!

LORD, YOU'RE MESSING WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT NOW! TIME YOU SHUT UP AND ACTED LIKE A CITIZEN!

AH, BUT I'M PART OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL, WHOSE HEGEMONY THE U.S. HAS ALREADY GUARANTEED.

BESIDES, I THINK THERE'S STILL A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND THE WILL OF AMANDA WALLER. THEY DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING YOU DO, DO THEY?

LIKE THIS VISIT? OR THAT TITANO BUSINESS*

*SEEN IN SUPERMAN/ANX. #1. -- BOB

AND ISN'T IT STRANGE THAT THE WHOLE WILLIAM HELL/JOSEPH HELLER CASE* NEVER WAS APPROVED BY THE NSC? HMMMM?

*SQUAD #4. -- BOB

HEH. YOU'RE GOOD, MAX. HARD BARGAINER. I WONDER HOW YOU LEARN SO MUCH. I WONDER ONE OTHER THING ABOUT YOU, TOO.

OH? WHAT'S THAT?

IS THIS FOOT ATTACHED?

NOW, ABOUT THE SQUAD...

NURSE!

BACK IN RUSSIA...
WOOOSH
BRRROAAARR!
DAMN THOSE ROCKET REDS! THEY DIDN'T CAPTURE THE PRISONER-- WE, THE PEOPLE'S HEROES, DID!
HE IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY!
FASTER, DRIVER! I WANT US AT THE PRISON BEFORE THEM!
NEXT TIME, I STEAL A JEEP WITH MORE PETROL.
AH, WELL. IT'S ONLY 20 KILOMETERS. I CAN RUN THAT.
AT THE PRISON...
NIGHT-NIGHT!

TIME TO USE THE PATENTED BLUE BEETLE COMPRESSED AIR BLAST!
WOMP
HMMM. TIME TO USE THE PATENTED BLUE BEETLE DAZZLE LIGHT!
FLASH!
MY EYES! YOU LITTLE WORM!
THANK HEAVENS! OR IT WAS GOING TO BE TIME TO USE THE PATENTED BLUE BEETLE FEET!
I SAID I DIDN'T LIKE TO HIT WOMEN, LADY! BUT I HOPE THIS HURTS YOU MORE THAN IT DOES ME!
AND NOW IT'S TIME TO USE THE PATENTED BLUE BEETLE KARATE CHOP TO THE NECK!
HAI!
CHOP
YOW WOW OW WOW OHWEEEAHHHHHH!
WELL? YOU GOING TO HIT ME?
NO! DON'T TICKLE MY RIBBIES!
MWA-HA-HA!
NO! STOP! SHRIEEEEEK! NO!
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!
NICE! SOUNDS CONVINCING! REALLY!

I LOST CONTROL, JONN. JUST WENT BERSERK. I... KILLED CUJO.*
*SEEN LAST ISSUE -- ROBERT G.
I'M AS BAD AS ANY OF THE PEOPLE I'M RUNNING WITH.
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOU AND SOME OF THEM, MARI, IS YOUR REMORSE.
THEY KILL WITHOUT IT AND THAT'S WHAT MAKES THEM DANGEROUS.
YOU'RE FIERCE AND CAPABLE OF KILLING--YOU ALWAYS WERE--AND YOU'VE ALWAYS GUARDED AGAINST THAT INSTINCT.
YOU SLIPPED ONCE. THAT DOES NOT MAKE YOU LIKE THEM. I KNOW YOU TOO WELL TO THINK THAT OF YOU.
THANK YOU, J'ONN...
COMRADE CHAIRMAN--I HAVE BEEN TALKING WITH THE PRISONER. THOUGH RIGHTFULLY HELD, HE MAY BE WRONGFULLY SLAIN IF HE REMAINS.
YOU'RE SAYING WE SHOULD HELP HIS ESCAPE?
DA. BUT TO DO THIS--BOTH TEAMS MUST WORK IN CONCERT.
I'M WILLING.
SO ARE WE. WE WERE SUCKERED INTO WAY-LAYING A MISSION OF MERCY.
LET'S GET THE OTHERS
YAAHHH!
13

MADAME, A TRUCE HAS BEEN DECLARED. IT WOULD HELP IF YOU DIDN'T HIT THAT MAN.

I WANT TO TURN HIM INTO BUTTER.

C'MON! YOU HEARD THE MAN! TRUCE!

-whew!-

CANARY AND THE BRONZE TIGER ARE BACKING OFF. I HATE TO ASK THIS, BUT-- WHERE'S GUY?

MAKING FRIENDS.

I WANT CHER SPLEEN, YA GREEN-GARBED RATBAG!

WELL, YOU'VE ONLY YOURSELF TO BLAME FOR ALL THIS, YOUNG MAN! IF YOU WEREN'T SO INTENT ON HURTING YOURSELF, I WOULDN'T HAVE TO DO THIS!

STREWTH!!!

YA GOTTA CUT HIM LOOSE NOW, GUY. WE'RE ALL SUPPOSED TO BE WORKING TOGETHER.

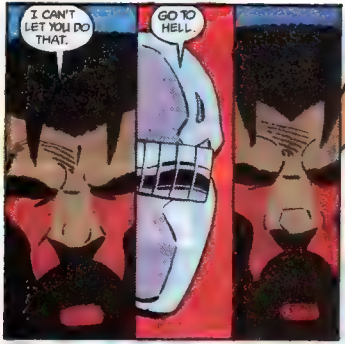
DOOOOO! BUT HOW DO I DO THAT WITHOUT HIS TRYING TO HURT HIMSELF AGAIN?

YOU WORK ON IT.

HOLD IT, DEADSHOT!!!

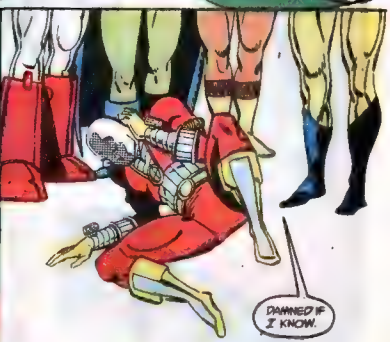
WHAT'RE YOU PLANNING TO DO? SHOOT HIM?

MAYBE.


I CAN'T LET YOU DO THAT.
GO TO HELL.

TAK
WHIIIP
BDOW!BDOW!

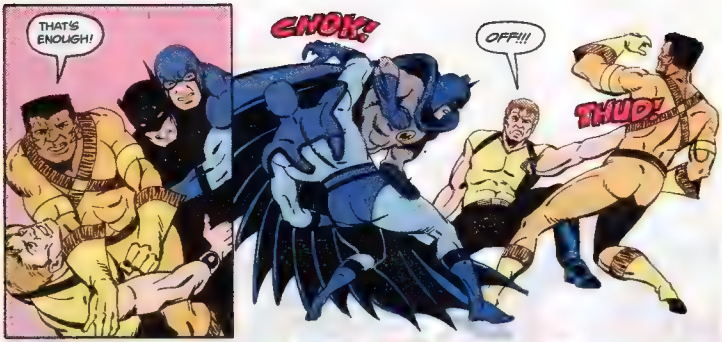
DID HE REALLY TRY TO KILL ME? OR DID YOUR BLOW MAKE HIM ACCI-DENTALLY PULL THE TRIGGER?!


DAMNED IF I KNOW.

EVERYONE'S ACCOUNTED FOR EXCEPT FOR FLAG AND BATMAN. ANYONE SEE WHERE THEY WENT?

I THINK I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THEM ROLLING AROUND THE CORNER
BATMA--?
GOOD LORD!
TWO MEN-- EACH WITH AN IRON WILL, AN IRON DETERMINATION, AN IRON CONTROL. BOTH DRIVEN TO THE LIMIT BY FRUSTRATION.
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THAT CONTROL--SNAPS?
WHAK!
WHAM!
KRAK!

BATMAN! STOP IT! WE'VE DECLARED A TRUCE!
THEY'RE TRYING TO KILL EACH OTHER!
WHAM!
BLUD!
CHOK!
BAM!
THOK!
KRAK!
I THINK... I MAY... FAINT!
GURK!
ERRANHK
BOW


THAT'S ENOUGH!
CHOK!
OFF!!!
THUD!

I MEAN IT-- THAT'S ENOUGH!
ANOTHER STEP AND WE'LL TIE YOU BOTH DOWN!

COME BACK HERE, YOU COLD-HEARTED...
COME...
...BAAAAAAAK.
HE'S ALIVE, BUT HE NEEDS HOSPITALIZATION A.S.A.P...

WE'VE GOT ONLY A FEW MOMENTS BEFORE THE RUSSIAN FORCES ARRIVE. HERE'S WHAT WE NEED TO DO.
TIGER, YOU NEED TO GET YOUR PEOPLE OUT OF HERE. WE'LL SAY THAT WE REPULSED YOUR ATTACK BUT YOU MANAGED TO ESCAPE.
WE'LL TELL THEM THAT--TO INVESTIGATE THE MATTER FURTHER--WE'VE TAKEN THE PRISONER--MR. TRESSER HERE--INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY AND WILL INTERROGATE HIM AT OUR RUSSIAN EMBASSY, FROM WHICH HE WILL "ESCAPE" IN A DAY OR SO.
HOW QUICKLY CAN YOU PEOPLE BE GONE?
OHH, THIS FAST.
KOMP!
THANK YOU, EVE.
I FIGURE YOU WERE THE PRIME MOVER BEHIND THIS RESCUE.
YEAH--ALONG WITH FLAG. YOU OWE HIM, TOO, TOM.
TAKE CARE. SEE YOU STATESIDE.
WHY IS IT EVERY BLOODY TIME SOMEONE GETS BLOODY HURT I HAVE TO PLAY BLOODY PACK HORSE?!
HEH! YOU KNOW, A KISS LIKE THAT COULD MAKE ANOTHER MAN JEALOUS!
WHY? WHAT'S NIGHTSHADE TO YOU?

A SHORT TIME LATER..

YOU'RE DOING WHAT?!

JUST TAKING HIM TO OUR RUSSIAN EMBASSY FOR SAFEKEEPING

GEE, YOU GUYS DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THAT, DO YOU?

UH...LET US TAKE PRISONER INSIDE VESSEL, COMRADE GUY.

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT--

OUR CHARTER AND OUR AGREEMENT WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT GIVES US EVERY RIGHT.

UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU WANT TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT.

STATESIDE...

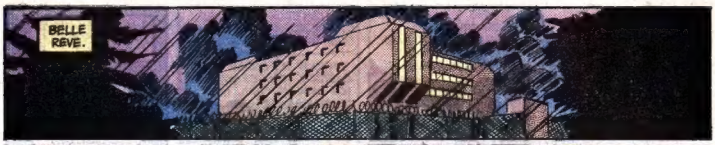
LAWSUIT! LAWSUIT! LAWSUIT!

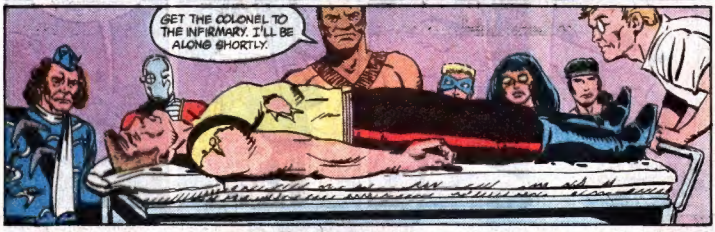
COME ON OUT OF THAT BED, YOU FAKING LITTLE MAGGOT!

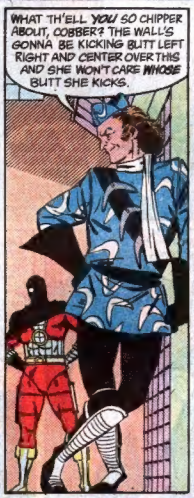
THIS JUST IN. A BAND OF ADVENTURERS TODAY TRIED TO BREAK INTO A RUSSIAN PRISON IN AN ATTEMPT TO FREE THE MYSTERY MAN THE RUSSIANS HAVE HELD PRISONER SINCE THE ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO RESCUE RUSSIAN AUTHORESS ZOYA TRIGORIN.

THEY WERE MET BY MEMBERS OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE INTERNATIONAL WHO REPULSED THE ATTEMPT. JLI CHAIRMAN JONN JONZZ HAD THIS TO SAY--

WE'VE TAKEN THE PRISONER WITH US TO OUR RUSSIAN EMBASSY FOR FURTHER QUESTIONING ON THE WHOLE MATTER.
NOW GET THAT MICROPHONE OUT OF MY FACE.
DAMMIT, I THOUGHT WE WERE AGREED THEY WEREN'T GOING TO GIVE PRESS CONFERENCES WITHOUT MY APPROVAL!
YOU CAN STICK YOUR PRESS CONFERENCE AND YOUR JLI UP YOUR TAILPIPE, LORD.
WITHOUT THE SQUAD IN CUSTODY, YOU GOT NOTHING FOR SHOW AND TELL. NOW I'M GOING BACK TO BELLE REVE--
-- TO KICK SOME SQUAD TAIL!!!
THE JLI VEHICLE HANGAR, SOME TIME LATER...
GEE, C'MON, BATMAN. YOU HAVE TO TALK TO SOMEBODY SOMETIME!
COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY, GUY. I DON'T THINK YOU WANT TO HEAR WHAT HE HAS TO SAY RIGHT NOW.
CCCP
BUT WE'RE ALL FRIENDS HERE, AREN'T WE?
I DON'T THINK THIS IS THE RIGHT TIME, BEETLE...
I'M TELLING YOU THIS ALWAYS WORKS WITH BATS. WATCH.
UHHH...BATS? LOOK, ABOUT YOUR EAR...
NOT THIS TIME. OKAY.
I'M ALSO ANGRY, BATMAN. I THINK YOU KNEW A LOT MORE ABOUT THESE PEOPLE THAN YOU'VE LET ON.
IF YOU'VE USED THE JLI FOR A PRIVATE VENDETTA...
THIS LEAGUE IS A JOKE! I'M TIRED OF BABYSITTING MORONS!
I QUIT!!!
IF...THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT...
SNIFF! SNIFF!
AWWW, GEEE...!







NEXT: LAND OF THE NIGHTSHADES!

SUICIDE NOTES

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Credit Department: Issue #9 was miscredited and Carl Gafford, our regular colorist did not color the issue. Aiding us at the last minute was the talented and kind Juliana Ferriter. Many thanks for the two issue assist, Juliana. You're welcome back here anytime.

Dear Bob,

"The Final Price" was in many ways the best of the MILLENNIUM crossovers that I have read so far. Certainly, Karin is one of the most believable of the Manhunter "moles" that have been revealed to this point. Though I am not too wild about the whole concept of the moles, Karin's decision to side with the Manhunters was well justified in the context of the current situation and her outlook. The Manhunters preyed on her feelings of personal betrayal (by Flag) and used this in combination with the grip they attained on her by maneuvering her into loving the Shaw duplicate. This very astute push/pull strategy succeeded in blinding her to reality and to her duty to her country and her world. Likewise, Karin's eventual abandonment of the Manhunters was well portrayed. The collapse of the illusion cast by the Shaw duplicate hit her hard, thus giving her a push/pull motivation *against* the Manhunters. Once again, she was personally betrayed and besides being a motivating force on its own, this helped pull the blinkers from her eyes so that she could once again see her duty (and maybe—just maybe—she could catch a glimpse of the real Rick Flag).

However, there were certain aspects of the issue that dampened my enthusiasm somewhat. First, I am not very happy about the overall MILLENNIUM situation in which a reader must follow that series in order to get a proper perspective on certain issues of a regular series that this reader may follow—such as SUICIDE SQUAD. However, I am willing to live with this situation since MILLENNIUM is a major series and since it ties in with several DC titles and this is not too much of a burden to follow. But where I draw the line is in MILLENNIUM-related crossovers to *other* regular series. Thus, you may guess that I am not happy with the four-way MILLENNIUM crossover-within-a-crossover involving SS #9, CAPTAIN ATOM #11, SPECTRE #10 and DETECTIVE COMICS #582. And from reading this issue, I have specific complaints with each of the three related issues. The worst one comes on page 19, where we are told that we must read SPECTRE if we want to know why the Manhunters suddenly fell apart—a rather major plot element! This means that a reader who does not buy SPECTRE regularly must either go out and buy a copy or forever remain uninformed. Frustrating. An event that is almost as serious occurs on the final page when the Squad members survive the explosion that was "certain" to kill them and then it inexplicably begins to snow. Readers who did not also pick up a copy of CAPTAIN ATOM are left to wonder at the huge "plot hole" and bizarre weather conditions. Lastly, we have the crossover reference to DETECTIVE on page 20. It merely informs us that Karin met Batman in that mag while driving the bomb to its destination. Anyone eagerly turning to those pages in hopes of finding a key revelation finds only a rather inconsequential and brief meeting. The crossover reference turns out to be rather gratuitous and unwarranted.

Now, maybe you don't believe it is any huge imposition to "force" a reader to pick up another issue or two and maybe you're right. Maybe you think that if the reader doesn't pick up the other issues that he won't miss out on much and maybe you're right. Maybe. But that's not really my point. My point is that a reader of a title shouldn't have to search out other issues on such a large scale. Some people can't (or won't) do so and I don't think it is right that they should suffer for it.

Okay, so I'm being picky. Okay, so maybe I'm being a wet blanket. *Somebody* has to get all unreasonable and grumpy. And this time it looks like it's me.

T.M. Maple
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You have clearly stated some of the key objections readers had to MILLENNIUM but it looks like it also had its positive effects. Later this column we'll have mail from readers who sampled this title for the first time thanks to the crossovers. Not bad since we're out to have everyone read our books.

The one place I disagree with you is about the importance of the Karin Grace-Batman conversation. She tips Bats off to the Squad's government connection, setting up issue #10's storyline. A bit more than inconsequential, eh?

*****

Dear Bob,

STORY: Good, held interest, flowed, lots of action. Highlights included Captain Boomerang conning Slipknot into running into the swamp to see if the bracelet would really explode. Talk about a dirty rat. Liked the way you kept trying to mark Privateer as a traitor. Or maybe he was? Karin redeemed herself, though, by taking the bomb to the center of the base. I always felt she was a superfluous character and did not really add anything to the team other than being an outlet for Rick Flag's affections.

ART: Although I am not a great fan of Luke's, the art has grown on me since I started reading this book. I couldn't imagine SUICIDE SQUAD being drawn by anybody else. Layouts were adequate, though when the Manhunter base exploded, I felt a full page would have been more effective.

PROGRESS: Issues 1-9 have been of a very high standard. Story writing has been consistent, strong and lively. Full marks to Mr. Ostrander. Artwork has definitely improved.

SUGGESTIONS: Keep Bronze Tiger as field leader. He is a strong and sensible character who, if given time, will develop into a strong leader.

OUTLOOK: It looks rosy since team-ups with both the Justice League and Doom Patrol are in the offing.

George Apaya
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England

*****

Dear Bob,

Once again, I take pen in hand. I have praised this book before and I will do it again. The team of Ostrander, McDonnell and Lewis is producing one of DC's best books. Considering the quality of most of DC's books, being in the top three is amazing. I'm glad there will be an Annual next year.

The revelation of Karin Jace as the Manhunter was surprising and I don't like it. In fact, I don't like the "Manhunter in every book" theory of MILLENNIUM. That is my one big problem with the whole mini-series. Of course, you don't have any affect on that, and what's done is done. It

will be interesting to see what you do with Privateer. I hope you will have him help Flag deal with the loss of Karin. Don't take Mark Shaw out of the series just yet.

What is the fascination with Firestorm villains and having everything happen to them? You've used Plastique, Mindboggler, Killer Frost, Parasite, Multiplex and Slipknot. Other villains you've used, besides the core group are Penguin and Privateer. Look at the casualties! Mindboggler and Multiplex are dead and Slipknot had an arm blown off! These are/were my favorite Firestorm villains. Lay off them a while. Speaking of Slipknot, I do believe that Lashina found him.

Justin Steiner
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Since John is the current FIRESTORM, he has greater flexibility with that rogues' gallery than most others. However, you neglected to include Chronos with the first year's worth of guest characters. Coming in 1988 so far will be Javelin, Punch & Jewelee, and Captain Cold—not a Firestorm foe in the bunch. And congratulations—you were the first to identify Lashina as the Duchess.

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Dear Suicide Squad,

I really liked issue #9. It was the first issue of the SUICIDE SQUAD that I have bought. I have some questions about the team:

1) What is the purpose of the Squad and who do they work for?

2) What is the deal with the explosive bracelets?

3) What is the truth Batman will learn in #10?

Cheney Moss
Portland, OR

1) The Suicide Squad is a division of a covert government agency called Task Force X. Another division is Checkmate, which just got its own title last month. Both divisions work for Amanda Waller, who in turn reports to the President. The Squad and Checkmate are teams of last resort and will handle missions deemed too dangerous for other government agencies.

2) The Squad is composed of "flawed" individuals, including many super-villains. They are offered amnesty and freedom if they accept a mission and survive. To ensure that the criminals do their job and not flee, they wear bracelets that will blow their arms off—as happened to Slipknot.

3) The secret Batman learned is that the government is freeing criminals and actively employing them to perform tasks. This goes against everything he believes in—see this issue for more.

*****

Dear Squad,

I would like to open by congratulating you on the best cover yet. It had just the right feel to it, with Deadshot and Flag leading the way. And of course, Captain Boomerang tagging along in the back.

The story was another thriller with more action than I thought possible. I'm glad to see the Squad lying, arguing, and trying to escape. After all they are some of the worst villains on Earth.

In LEGENDS #2, Mrs. Waller tells Captain Boomerang that if the Squad survives the mission, all of their current criminal charges would be dropped. They would also be free to go if they keep their mouths shut. In LEGENDS #6, Captain Boomerang almost tells Godfrey about the Squad. So is Boomerang on the Squad permanently, and if he isn't then why is he still hanging around? Why is Deadshot still on the Squad?

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Boomerang is such a low life and so completely amoral, the Squad figures their secret is safer if they keep him on the team. This way, he's under surveillance, they get good work out of him and if he dies, the problem's over. Boomerang sees himself receiving a sweet deal so likes hanging about. Deadshot sees the missions as an outlet for his need for adventure. He carries a death wish and would rather die on a mission than in prison. Both characters will undergo changes within the coming year so don't go away.

*****

Dear Robert, John, Luke, Bob, Todd and Carl,

To my mind, the promise of those four panels on the last page of MILLENNIUM #4 was not borne out. The "swamped" adventure wasn't all that compelling, and if I consider SUICIDE SQUAD the best of the quartet, it's strictly as the best of a bad batch. You get points for linking "The Final Price" so carefully to SPECTRE, CAPTAIN ATOM and DETECTIVE, but the death of Karin Grace could have been handled better. Were John not such a good writer, had he not made the pain of her confession so apparent, Karin's Manhunter connection would have been laughable. As it was, past issues didn't set up the betrayal very well—out of the first eight issues, Karin appeared in only four, and even there she said next to nothing.

All the same, I liked "The Final Price" for several reasons: for one thing, I was glad to see that Task Force X's bracelets were actually set to explode; for another, Rick Flag managed to lead the team without being nominally in charge; the Privateer made an interesting addition and while the Star-Tsar phase of his career counts against him, I look forward to seeing what the Squad will do for him. Yet the fact remains that the set-up for #10, the plans for using Speedy in #11-12 and the announcements of the various upcoming specials excited me more than issue's story.

If Karin is dead—from SPECTRE I gather that she is—how about having Col. Flag turn to Nightshade or to June Moone for consolation? I'd prefer June since Nightshade and Nemesis make a better couple. Don't rush it, though; since this is a more business-like group than, say, the JLI, the personal lives of the characters aren't as important as they would be elsewhere—however, this doesn't mean that they should be ignored. The Squad *can* be redemptive, and I'd like to see it have a positive effect on at least one of its members.

Am I correct in thinking that Lashina is the woman who found Slipknot?

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Okay, that makes you number two.

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COMING ATTRACTIONS

You would think that everything would be fine after this tangle with the JLI, right? You couldn't be more wrong when everything goes badly for Amanda in Washington and then she lets the Squad accompany Nightshade on a trip to the Nightshade dimension. We get there and discover that it's not the same place she left 10 years ago and worse, she can't find her brother. The entire team is along for the ride as we begin a wild and wooly three-parter that is only the beginning of greater things to come in 1988 (yes, that means a rematch with the Jihad, new members, a spin-off mini-series, our first Annual and more). Plus, Luke stretches himself and inks the next issue. Bob gets a breather for a few minutes and then tackles the secret origin of Nightshade but that's for next month's space.

See you in a month and bring plenty of popcorn. Until then, keep smiling!

—Bob Greenberger